



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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August 18, 2020

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight
101 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RIBridges system, which covers the reporting period July 16, 2020 – August 15, 2020. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement;
- DHS staffing and employee training;
- Pending applications;
- SNAP timeliness and lobby/DHS Call Center summaries;
- CCAP off-cycle payments;
- LTSS interim payments and;
- Correspondence with federal partners (if any)

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, your interest in the health of the RIBridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHAWKINS", written in a cursive style.

Courtney E. Hawkins, Director



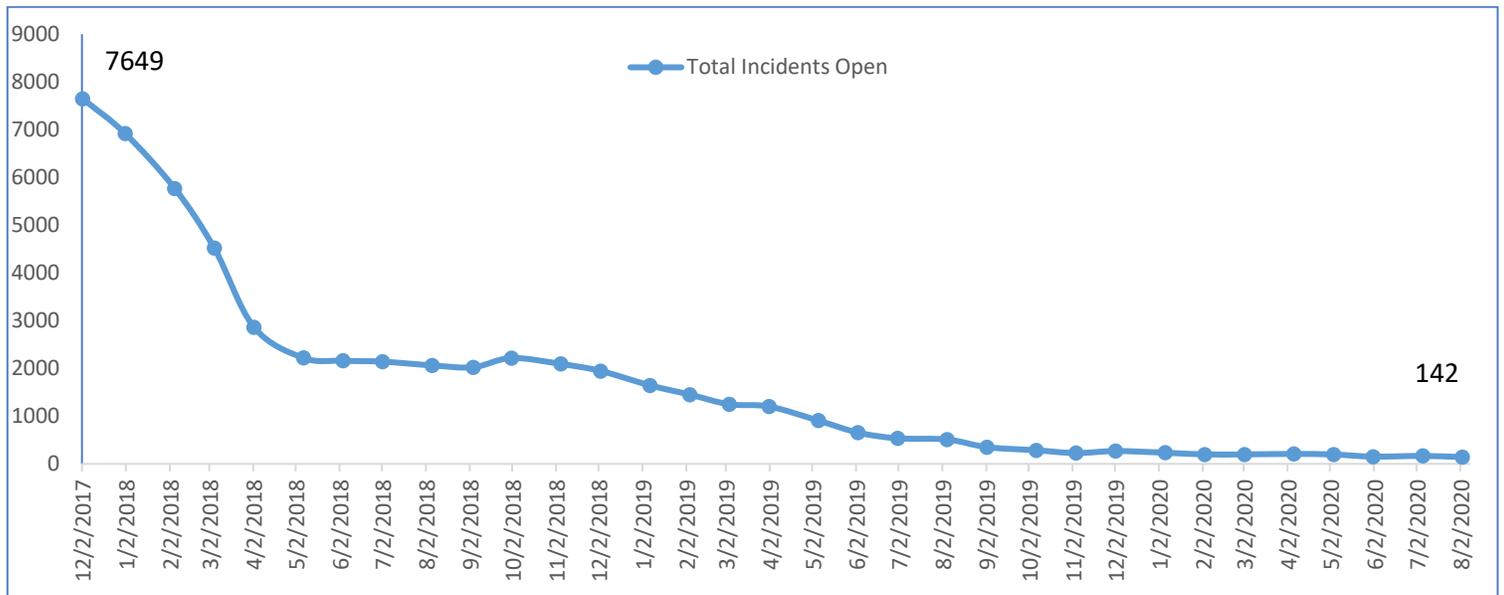
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

August 2020

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life, and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of work on RI Bridges is an important part of the equation. With system stabilization under our belt, we continue to focus on ensuring full compliance of the system. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

Due to a focused effort on consistent and stable system operations, the number of new and existing incidents (when the system does not operate as expected for a DHS client, worker or provider) has decreased by 98% since December 2017. As of August 2, 2020, there were 142 open incidents.



DHS STAFFING + TRAINING

Hiring Update

DHS continues to make progress in hiring candidates for critical positions identified. Since July, DHS hired four employees:

- 1 Employment and Career Advisor dedicated to the Providence Field Office
- 1 Assistant Administrator, Community and Planning Services dedicated to SNAP Outreach
- 1 Social Caseworker, dedicated to the Long Term Services and Supports team
- 1 Administrator, Family and Children’s Services dedicated to the Child Care Program”

Training Overview

Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
New Hire Orientation (4-2- hour sessions)	8/3/2020 8/4/2020	8	3	0
SNAP Training (2 – 1-hour sessions)	7/21/2020 7/29/2020	2	0	19
Case Maintenance (1 – 30 – minute session)	7/27/2020	.50	0	8
GPA Burial (1) (3-30-minutes sessions)	7/17/2020 7/20/2020 8/3/2020	1.5	0	21
GPA Burial (2) (4-30-minutes sessions)	7/17/2020 7/20/2020 7/27/2020 8/4/2020	2	0	51
Bits and Pieces (2-30 minutes sessions)	7/22/2020 7/29/2020	1	0	27
Medical Premium Payment (1 – 3-hour session)	7/21/2020	3	0	6
Assisted Living (1-1- hour session)	7/28/2020	1	0	9
Health Insurance and Income (1 – 3-hour session)	8/3/2020	3	0	15
Resource Referral (1-1- hour session)	8/5/2020	1	0	7
FTI and HIPPA	8/11/2020	.50	0	24
Totals		23.50	3	187*

**current number of staff trained is a duplicate number*

Workshop Descriptions

New Hire Orientation: The New Employee Orientation (NEO) Program is the first step in welcoming new hires to RIDHS. Its main objective is to familiarize new employees with the organization, its organizational structure, and its policies and procedures.

Case Maintenance: This training focuses on standardizing processes associated with working cases in RI Bridges. It is a remote training delivered via Zoom. The learning outcomes for the training are as follows:

- Understand the Case Maintenance Checklist
- Learn where to find helpful documents (QRGs, Transmittals, etc.)
- Understand proper case maintenance practices

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP): The SNAP Training is designed to introduce Eligibility Technicians to SNAP program policy and RIBridges. The virtual sessions are focused on SNAP policy.

Procedures for Assistant Living: This training will inform participants on the process flow for Assisted Living applications, including the role of community and agency partners such as Office of Healthy Aging and Community Action Program Agencies. Participants will understand the eligibility criteria for Assisted Living and be able to calculate Beneficiary Liability for program participants.

GPA Burial (1): This training focuses on introducing ESSU staff to GPA Burial, including a program overview, a description of the GPA Burial application requirements and a demo of processing the application in RIBridges.

GPA Burial (2): This training focuses on introducing ESSU staff to GPA Burial, including a program overview, a description of the GPA Burial application requirements, and a demo of processing the application in RIBridges. It is the second part of a 4-part series.

Bits and Pieces: This is a training for Eligibility Technicians and Supervising Eligibility Technicians. It reviews the concepts across programs on entering income, removing a member, adding a member and customer portal. The shows participants how to enter the information in RIBridges on the listed topics.

Medical Premium Payment: Participants will understand the history of the Katie Beckett Program and its impact on disabled children under the Medicaid state plan. Participants will understand the process flow for a Katie Beckett application and the policy surrounding this program. Participants will view Katie Beckett cases in the Integrated Eligibility System to understand what a Pending and an approved Katie Beckett case will look like when entered.

Multicultural Competency Training: The Multicultural Competency Modules offer contextualized, scaffolded anti-oppression educational workshops for RIDHS employees. There are four foundational modules that introduce participants to frameworks, concepts, and strategies so RIDHS personnel are better equipped to advance its diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic goals individually and collectively. The workshops are offered virtually. Each session meets for 1.5-2 hours. The format for the sessions includes facilitated dialogue with individual and group activities.

- **Module One:** *Advancing Anti-Oppression in the Workplace* is the first of the four workshops. This session presents and discusses the multicultural competencies that are necessary to advance anti-oppression in the workplace (e.g., awareness, understanding, knowledge, interaction, and sensitivity).

Health and Insurance and Resources: This training covers the policy surrounding countable and excluded resources for Medicaid and LTSS applications and renewals. Participants will view resource documentation, understand how to calculate total countable resources and be able to enter resources into the IES system.

Resource Referral: Participants will understand the most common sources for completing a resource referral, including Annuities, Trusts and Promissory Note. Participants will learn how to complete resource referrals, the process for having them reviewed and entering them into the IES system. Participants will also gain understanding of the policy for the three complicated financial instruments (Annuities, Trusts and Promissory Notes) and how these may impact the resources, income and review for transfer of assets for applicants.

FTI/HIPAA: This is a required training for all DHS employees. This refresher training covered the federal regulations and internal procedures that staff need to follow in protecting customer information.

PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

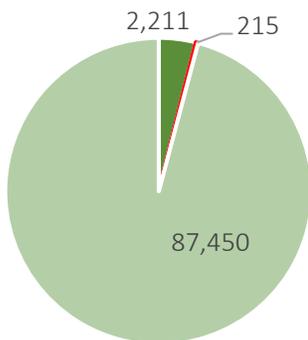
The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of August 13, 2020, the number of pending new applications across all programs is 3,853. The total of overdue pending applications awaiting State action is 1,389.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	10	65	75	15	31	46	121
SNAP Non-Expedited	494	354	848	62	20	82	930
CCAP	9	119	128	0	5	5	133
GPA Burial	0	6	6	0	2	2	8
SSP	0	19	19	0	5	5	24
GPA	15	26	41	19	17	36	77
RIW	126	80	206	21	15	36	242
Undetermined Medical	15	224	239	22	701	723	962
Medicaid-MAGI	1	1	2	26	38	64	66
MPP	2	33	35	1	6	7	42
Complex Medicaid	5	19	24	11	88	99	123
LTSS	200	447	647	17	461	478	1,125
Totals	877	1,393	2,270	194	1,389	1,583	3,853

**LTSS backlog data is temporarily coming from a separate source from RIBridges while the primary dashboard that collects data is currently undergoing improvements.*

SNAP TIMELINESS

DHS continues to make progress in improving customer service. The timeliness for SNAP applications was 91.7 percent for expedited and 97 percent for non-expedited for July 2020. SNAP timeliness was 56 percent in November 2017. We have achieved more than 90 percent timeliness from April 2018 through July 2020. A rapid response team immediately works to resolve any issues blocking application processing / timeliness to continuously drive improvement to this metric.

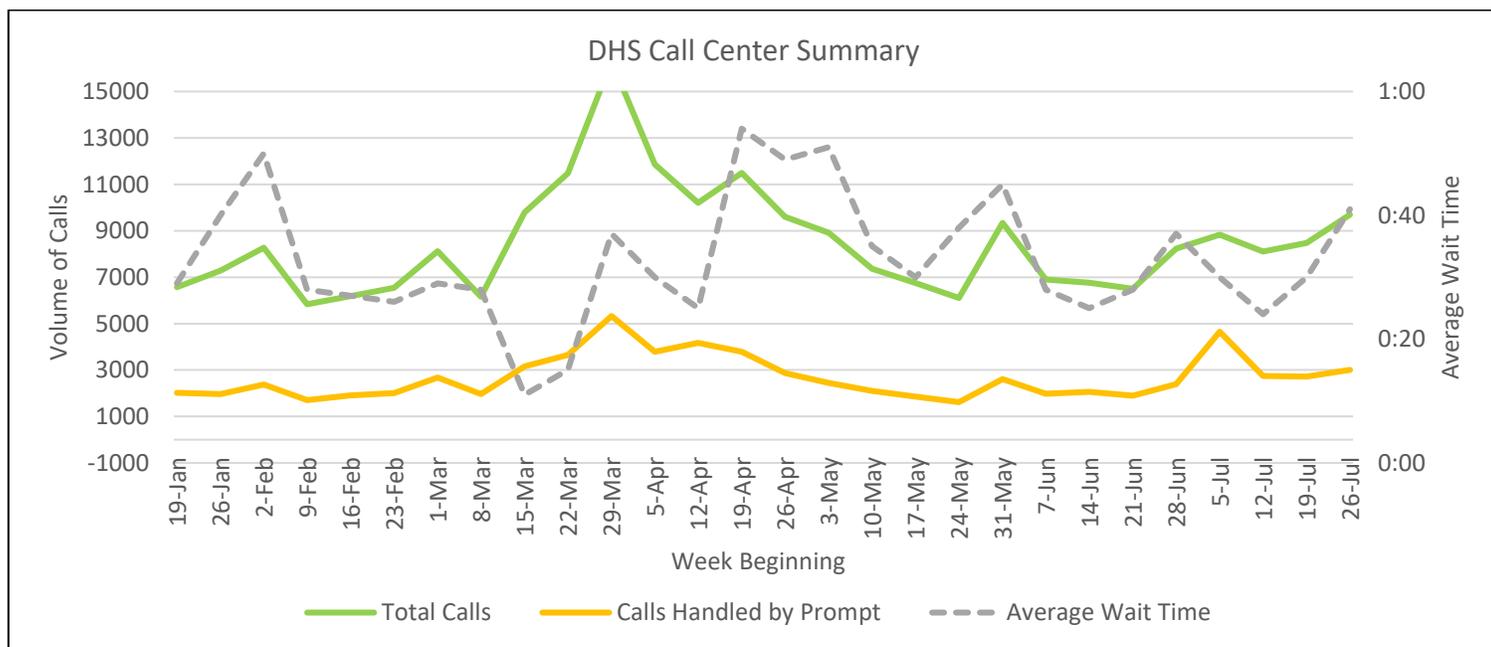


In July 2020, SNAP benefits were issued timely to nearly 87,500 households. Despite the impact of COVID-19, more than 91 percent of new SNAP Applications were processed timely. The number of applications not processed timely represents less than 1 percent of our SNAP population receiving benefits.

Untimely July Applications | Timely Applications | Total SNAP Population

CALL CENTER

In July 2020, the average wait time was 31 minutes, 5 seconds. With the close of lobby facing operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the DHS Call Center capacity was increased to accommodate the interviews and questions for public benefits.



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between May 19, 2020 and June 12, 2020.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
29	07/14/2020	515	\$2,566,177
29A (3A)	07/16/2020	12	\$23,055
29B (3B)	07/23/2020	9	\$21,554
4	07/28/2020	554	\$2,697,528
4A	07/30/2020	2	\$19,284
4B	08/06/2020	8	\$14,523
5	08/11/2020	557	\$2,722,661

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (4, 4A & 4B)	564	\$2,731,335
Off-cycle (27A & 27B)	10	\$33,807
Provider off-cycle/total	1.77%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	1.24%	-

- *Batch 5 has just processed. There have been no off-cycles associated with batch 5 at this time.*

LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are 461 overdue LTSS applications pending state action.

Through the contingency process, which ensures nursing and assisted living facilities receive prompt reimbursement from the State, Rhode Island has paid out approximately 120,000 dollars in interim payments to facilities for the state fiscal year 2021. The fiscal year for 2021 began on July 1, 2020.

Our payment reconciliation process remains ongoing as we continue to meet with long term care facilities across the state. In total, the state has paid approximately \$149 million, and we have collected about \$90,664,335 in reconciliation payments so far from nursing home facilities. This represents approximately 60% of the total amount of contingency payments made.

UPDATE ON RECERTIFICATIONS PROCESS

The State has verified that Medicaid renewals were appropriately initiated by the RI Bridges System in compliance with the CMS approved renewal plan.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to communicate regularly to review progress with the RIBridges system.

- July 6, 2020: RI Payment Error Rates for Fiscal Year 2019